

OCT 20 2009

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October 16, 2009

Dear Senator:

Recently, Governor Granholm issued Executive Order 2009-45 that not only merges the DNR and DEQ but also severely limits the authority of the Michigan Commission on Agriculture. The Michigan potato industry urges you to do whatever is in your power to either override this EO or demand that the Governor rescind the Order in order to submit another Executive Order that simply merges the DNR and DEQ.

This Executive Order undercuts the independent role of the Michigan Commission on Agriculture, and would seriously impede their ability to be a leader on agriculture development and job creation within the state.

The current system is simply not broken. The agriculture industry in Michigan is one of the only bright spots in the state's economy. The Commission now provides accountability for both stakeholders and the Executive Office. It maintains accountability for decisions and resources, and makes the department more responsive because of regular public exposure. This new Executive Order, which ostensibly was only to merge DNR and DEQ, will now diminish the authority of the Commission on Agriculture into a feeble advisory function.

The Commission has provided an eyeball to eyeball opportunity for the entire agricultural community to address current issues on the MDA agenda as well as developing new issues. This current relationship strengthens the connection from communication to action. A new structure of a weak Commission drives a wedge of separation between the agricultural community and the Executive Office.

Agriculture stands out as an engine of strength in the Michigan economy. Don't weaken a vibrant \$70 billion industry just to push a political agenda. For the good of Michigan jobs in a growing sector of our economy, we urge you to do whatever is necessary to rescind this Executive Order, and communicate your concerns to the Executive Office.

Sincerely,

Ben Kudwa
Ben Kudwa
Legislative Director